National I-10 Freight Corridor Study

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE ATTACHMENT # 5.3
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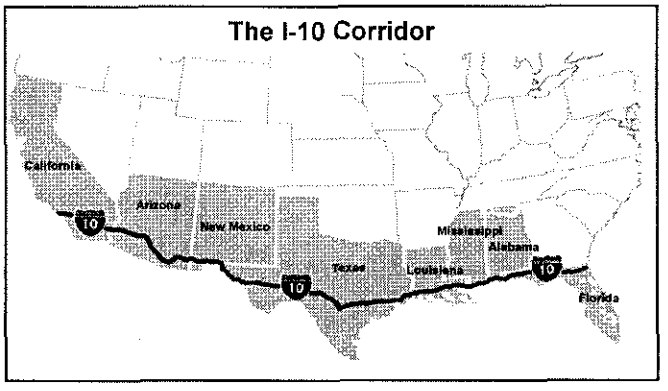
THE NATIONAL I-10 FREIGHT CORRIDOR STUDY

www.i10freightstudy.org

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This study was a joint effort by eight state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) including California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The purpose was to analyze current and projected freight movements, assess how current and future freight volumes impact national and local transportation systems, and develop a plan for improving freight flow along the Interstate 10 (I-10) Corridor.



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1) Assess the importance of freight moving on Interstate-10 to the economy of the corridor states and to the rest of the nation;

2) Identify current and future traffic operations and safety problems along the I-10 Corridor which impede freight flow;

3) Identify and evaluate strategies, including multimodal strategies, needed to facilitate freight flow within the corridor.

WHY IS THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IMPORTANT TO FREIGHT AND THE ECONOMY?

The Safety and Reliability of the Transportation System - For years, industry "pushed" freight to consumers. Goods were shipped and warehoused until needed. Today, the business model is changed - freight shipments are driven by consumer demand and inventories are smaller. Merchandise is "warehoused" in trucks, rail cars, containers, ships and cargo planes moving through the transport system.

Demand For Freight Transportation Will Grow - Nationally, domestic freight traffic is projected to increase 85 percent through 2020 and international trade is projected to grow 115 percent over the same period.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRADE ALONG THE CORRIDOR

The total estimated impact of freight transported along the I-10 corridor is $1.38 trillion, of which $339.4 billion is paid to some 10.4 million employees.

WHY THE I-10 STUDY?

The I-10 corridor has many of the same issues and needs that can be found on other strategic national corridors. Therefore, the solutions identified for I-10 are likely to be applicable in other parts of the country. The I-10 Corridor has more than 12,000 lane miles, 65 percent of which are in rural areas (the corridor includes portions of I-710 and SR 60 in California and I-12 in Louisiana, as well as other key connectors to the corridor). In 2000, there were 398 lane miles that did not provide sufficient capacity. By 2025, that number is expected to quadruple.

In addition to the roadway, other transportation modes are increasingly congested. Based on other studies and from industry comments, some railroad facilities that serve I-10 are near or already exceeding capacity. Also, congestion along connectors to major gateways such as ports (LA/Long Beach, Houston, New Orleans, Gulfport, Mobile and Jacksonville) and border crossings (TX, NM, AZ and CA) present a challenge for trade along the I-10 Corridor.

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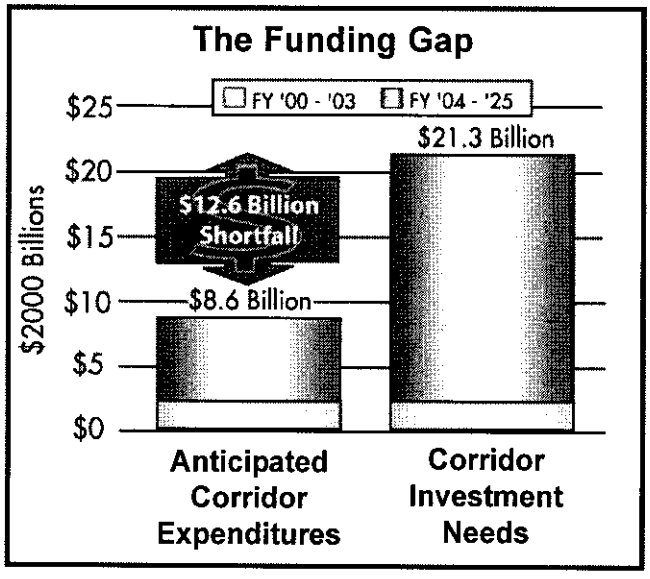
LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE I-10 STUDY

Freight transportation is central to the performance of the U.S. economy, and a key contributor to U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace. States are responsible for building, maintaining and operating the highways that carry the bulk of the nation's freight - nearly 80 percent of all domestic tonnage and 60 percent of inter-city ton miles. Continued investment in highways is fundamental to maintaining the nation's freight transportation infrastructure.

The continued trend toward a service economy, where reliability is not a choice, will increase the volume of freight traffic on highways at a projected pace nearly twice that of automotive traffic by 2025. Worsened highway congestion and capacity constraints impose costs on producers and consumers, and worsen conditions for the traveling public.

Highways are essential to the efficiency of other freight transportation system elements, including ports, inland waterways and railroads. Investments in high volume transportation corridors must integrate intermodal and multimodal considerations to guarantee an optimal distribution of freight and minimize the burden on highways.



Increasing capacity in high-volume corridors is the single best method for lowering highway congestion. Moreover, providing capacity works best when incorporating technologies such as ITS/CVO, as well as innovations in automated truck separation employing mass flow techniques to enhance freight productivity.

Increased funding is essential to guaranteeing that freight continues moving on highways as efficiently and productively as possible. Separating traffic streams offers an opportunity for increasing funding options. Increased funding requires collaboration between government and business.

Issues related to the demand for freight transportation transcend urban and state jurisdictions. The implementation of solutions, both traditional capacity enhancements as well as innovative technology solutions, will require State/State and/ or State/Federal partnerships, as well as partnerships with the private sector.

The decision process for funding improvements should be based, in part, on a system of strategic gateways and corridors that facilitate the movement of freight and people, with an emphasis on jurisdictions that bridge high use transportation corridors.

THE I-10 PARTNERSHIP WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS TO:

- Highlight the role of transportation in economic prosperity and expansion.
- Make the case for increased nationwide investment in transportation across all modes.
- Develop and implement a consensus ITS architecture, integrated with improvement efforts on other corridors.
- Help shape the FSHRP (Future Strategic Highway Research Program) agenda by working for inclusion of strategies to improve truck traffic flows.
- Play a role in coordinating investments along the I-10 corridor with an increased emphasis on jurisdictions that bridge the corridor.